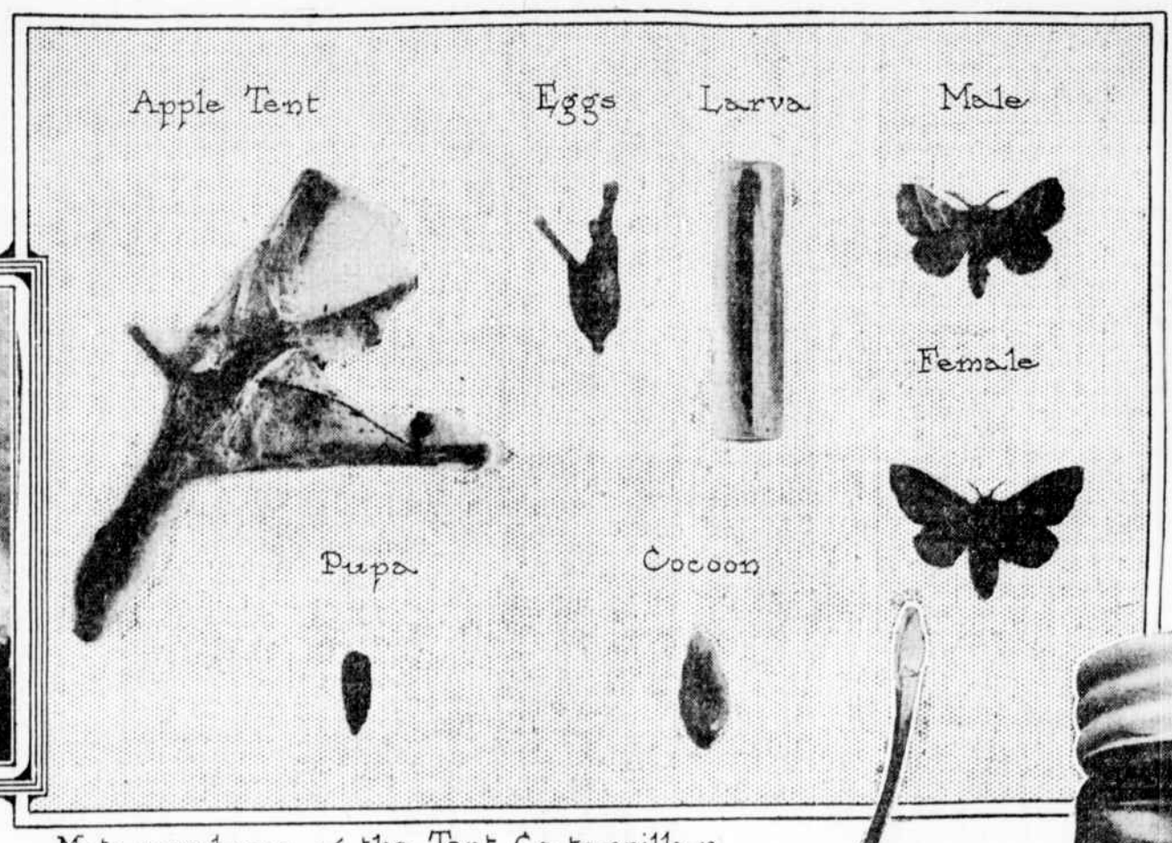
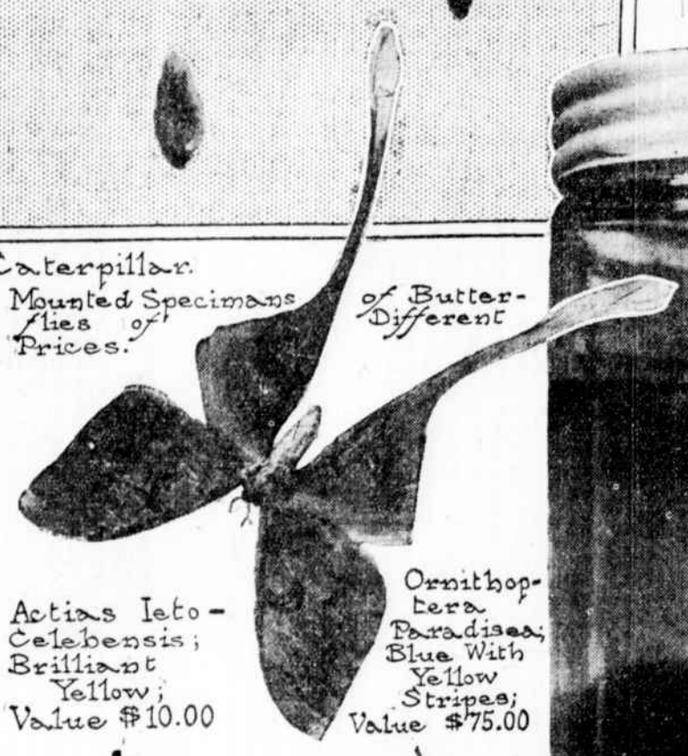
Scores of Men Chase Rare, Beautiful Butterflies to the End of the Earth

Mounting a "Giant Walking Stick" (Phasma Giganteus. At the Left is a Specimen Packed for Shipment.



Metamorphoses of the Tent Caterpillar.



Mounted Specimans of Butter-flies of Different Prices.

Actias Ieto-Celebensis; Brilliant Yellow; Value $10.00

Ornithoptera Paradisea; Blue With Yellow Stripes; Value $75.00

Satyrus Alope; Dark Blue; Value 10 Cents

The Texas Worm Preserved in Alcohol Previous to Being Stuffed and Mounted.

PHOTOS BY LEVICK.

Here's a Single Scientist-Collector, George Frank, of Brooklyn, Who Has Forty-two Hunters Scattered About the World's Wilds, and They Often Risk Death in the Effort to Capture Some Uncommon and Valuable Specimen of the Fluttering Insects.

ROLLING down the inclined side of a rubble-covered hill in the Rockies with a rattlesnake coiled about one's waist is not suggestive of the beautifully colored, gossamer-winged butterflies that are proudly displayed by some dilettante collector of lepidoptera. Yet the object of the serpent-belted hunter in clambering to the top of the gravelly ridge was to learn if he might find on its other side any insects of sufficient beauty, rarity or scientific interest to make them valuable to a collector or scientist.

With him collecting had ceased to be a hobby. It was the most serious and vital part of his whole life. Through it he gained his greatest joys and suffered his greatest sorrows. By it he instilled daily pleasure into his life, and by it at the same time he found the means to support that life by selling the fruits of his dangerous excursions to collectors and scientists. His market was large, for the aord collector will never die. It is applicable to pretty nearly one hundred per cent of the human race.

Almost every schoolboy is a butterfly collector. There is a certain period in the life of every boy when he feels an irresistible desire to collect. His taste may run to sea shells, or dead cats, or pasteboard boxes, or postage stamps, or buttons, or—butterflies. The collection is generally of no use to any one and often inspires great wrath in the breast of the collector's mother. If the agglomeration is inspired by an inkling of geology, it "brings dirt into the house." When it is made up of bugs it gives the young scientist's parent the creeps. A collection of signs filched from frenzied shop-keepers "takes up too much room in the house" and leads the maternal guardian to instruct her son in the basal concepts of integrity.

EARLY SYMPTOMS.

The inspiration of the young collector is rarely the desire to profit by the sale of his specimens for money. It need not proceed from a sense of the beautiful or an appreciation of the rare and curious. His consuming object is to gather together as large a number as possible of things of a certain kind, without having any two alike. If the collection contain duplicates it is damned. It may consist of one hundred and twenty-seven wire nails of one hundred and twenty-seven different shapes and sizes. That makes the lad's bosom swell with pride as he places them in neat rows and contemplates their unvarying variability. It would break his heart to see the head of any one of the hundred and twenty-seven fall beneath the blows of a hammer.

But supose the ten dozen and seven boast of only a paltry fifty or sixty different shapes and sizes. It is a collection no longer. In it the youngster sees merely a handful of wire nails, which will add greatly to the pleasure of a half hour spent with a hammer. With them he may impale the parlor table, or nail a window or door fast shut in hopes of hearing his father swear. They may lead him along a less devious path to the building of a boat or a cart or a sled or a shanty. But they have ceased to fascinate him by their never-ending dissimilarity.

The start of a butterfly collection is easily made. It's hardly possible to spend a day or even a half day in the country without having some member of the butterfly creation pay one a visit of welcome. It flies about in the sunshine, and the graceful contour and the delicate, rich or brilliant hue of the creature make it a thing of beauty. In its erratic flight it is like a leaf blown about by the wind. It catches the eye of the child at once—and the child is often a grown up one, too—who chases gleefully after the pretty thing, and, catching it, pursues another. He is charmed by their beauty, interested in their variety and fascinated by the sport of the chase. He wraps them up in a piece of paper or a leaf and carries them carefully home in his pocket.

He doesn't know yet the most merciful and least destructive way to take their lives. He doesn't know how to spread them out flat so as to display the full breadth of their wings. He kills them cruelly with mutilating fingers, and roughly stretches out their wings, breaking and destroying the specimens by his bungling ignorance. But if he has gone so far as to bring them home it is a good sign that the collector's instinct has been aroused. He may continue to catch them with his hat or cap as at first, or he may invest a sum between 25 cents and $1 in a real butterfly net.

His interest may flag after one or two afternoons spent in chasing his quarry across the meadows or through the woods. He may carry it further and in his summer playtime gather a numerous array of "specimens." If his interest continues, it may cease to thrive merely on the joy that beauty brings, but also on the pleasure of tracing the family connections of the insects, their ways of producing and maintaining life and their general habits. He is in a fair way to become a scientist, and if he's still a boy he may some time take his Ph. D. by a thesis on entomology. Thereafter his life is spent in the rarefied atmosphere of pure science, where, if the faces of the gods be not averted, he may finally make some great discovery that will win him a Nobel prize and cause his name to be uttered in whispers wherever scientists are assembled.

To learn from the lips of one who knows butterflies from all angles, the Tribune reporter went on a long journey toward the rising sun. It brought him at last to the eastern part of Brooklyn. There he found a gray-haired scientist-collector, named George Frank. Mr. Frank has been a collector all his life, and is bringing up his son to take up his work when he has to lay it down. He led his visitor through a long shop, lined with hundreds of cabinet drawers and boxes, each containing hundreds of mounted insect specimens, and into a warm, brightly lighted rear room—his workshop.

AN UNINTERRUPTED INTERVIEW.

"Sit down here," he said, as soon as they entered, "and make yourself at home. That's the reason I asked you to postpone your visit until evening, because we can be comfortable, without interruption."

And with that he took the caller's hat and overcoat, hung them carefully behind the door and drew forward an easy chair.

"But, no!" he exclaimed, jumping up almost at once. "Let me first show you some of my butterflies. Then we can sit down and talk about them as long as we please."

In the long shop he pulled out drawer after drawer, each lined with the gorgeous insects. They had been brought and sent to him from all parts of the world, uncivilized and civilized alike. The largest examples were the moths of all kinds, while the tropics had furnished those richest and most variegated in coloring.

"This pair," said Mr. Frank, as he drew out a fresh drawer and pointed out its two most striking occupants, "are examples of the Hekuba, one of the rarest of South American butterflies. They had often been observed, but few had ever been captured, for they flew always away high up in the air. Never did they come down. They found what they needed for food in the tree tops.

"One of my collectors, hunting along the Amazon River, watched them many times. He wanted to capture them but never would they come near. One morning—he had just been shaving—he left a small mirror leaning against the door sill of his hut. It was just an accident. The sunlight fell on it and the reflection flashed up into the trees.

"In a moment the butterflies he had wanted so many times were fluttering about the glass. The flash of light had drawn them to it. He caught them easily in his net. Since then many more have been taken in the same way."

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING SHY.

In the next drawer he opened the collector showed two specimens, male and female of the same species, brilliant objects from the same warm climate as the Hekuba.

"These two," he commented, "show how the commercial value of butterflies may vary greatly in the same household. The male of this species I offer for sale at a dollar and a half. For the female I get one hundred dollars."

"But why is the female so much rarer than the male?" he was asked.

"It isn't that," said Mr. Frank. "In all species the sexes are about evenly divided. But the female is often shy. She stays in the thick bushes and only the male flies out in the open, where the collector can find him easily and take him in his net.

"And here is one of the most curious forms of all," he went on, pulling out a fresh cabinet. In it were butterflies of widely different colorings and shadings. No one would suspect that they had any markings in common. They were spread out flat with only the upper sides of their wings exposed to view.

"You see, all the under sides of these wings are exactly alike," he said, picking up one insect after another, "and each one is so marked as to bear a very striking resemblance to an owl's head—here are the eyes, the brown shadings of the feathers, and in the middle the line of the nose."

In another drawer he exhibited two splendid specimens, richly colored in delicate shadings of blue and purple and green. The spread of their wings as they lay expanded in the case was seven or eight inches. As he moved the box nearer to the light the brilliant wings caught the reflection and turned to beautiful iridescent glass.

THE BUSINESS OF COLLECTING.

"These are difficult to obtain," he went on, "and, therefore, very valuable. The species is called the Attacus Zacateca, and my collectors send them to me from the high Andes of South America. A single pair like these is worth $150."

Back again in the quiet little workshop, the collector and the Sunday section man sat down to discuss two glowing cigars.

"You have mentioned your collectors in South America," said the latter; "do you have your own men gathering insects in other far off countries, too?"

"Just now I have forty-two collectors scattered about the world," replied Mr. Frank. "When I don't know them very well I pay them according to what they send back to me. When they are experienced and reliable I hire them for a weekly or monthly salary and pay their expenses. Some of them go from here and from other countries, such as Germany, and some of them are natives of the countries in which they are hunting. I have collectors now in Uganda, Africa; Calcutta, India; Japan, Mexico, Patagonia, Chili and many other places. One from whom I expect soon to receive interesting specimens was sent some time ago into the wilds of Alaska.

"Some of them would rather hunt butterflies and other insects than do anything else. They love the life. Such is Paul Kibler a young man, who came to me from Germany. He hates civilization and is happiest when living among the natives. He's never content long in one place. Some time ago he was collecting for me in New Guinea and nearly lost his eyesight by getting the poison-infected hair of a tarantula in his eyes. He was nursed safely through the adventure by a native woman, and soon after came here to report to me.

"But soon he was on the move again. He went to Germany for a visit, thence to Madagascar, where he twice had narrow escapes from death while hunting insects for me. Once he encountered a wild bull, which attacked him, and came near finishing him. Another time a skulking bushman fired a poisoned arrow, which barely grazed his skin. From Madagascar he went to Nias, India, an island near Ceylon, thence in succession to Borneo, to Celebes, an island in the Indian archipelago, and to the Key Islands, where he now is.

Mr. Frank's Shop Contains Hundreds of Cases Filled With Butterflies.

Mr. Frank in His Laboratory Preparing Larvae.

Asphyxiating a Butterfly With Fumes of Cyanide of Potassium.

"Here is another grewsome menace that we sometimes have to contend with," he continued, as he reached up to a shelf and tock down a whitewashed board about two feet square. Nailed securely to it, with wings extended almost to its edges, was a repulsive creature closely resembling a bat, its dead lips grinning back from two rows of sharp pointed teeth. "This I received only a day or two ago. It came from one of my men in British Guiana. He said it had been after him for about three weeks, each night while he slept, sucking his blood until he began to grow very weak. At last he captured it. It is called the Vampire. You have heard of it? Yes? The natives believe it first lulls its victim into a deeper sleep by fanning him with its bread wings."

As he replaced the Vampire his hand touched a large glass jar, which he lifted and set in front of his visitor. From it he took a large golden-brown butterfly, flecked with black spots, and held it in his palm. Its body was soft and flexible.

"It has been dead only a few minutes," said Mr. Frank. "Just before you came in it emerged from the cocoon. I caught it as it fluttered and dropped it into this death jar. In the bottom you see a quantity of cyanide of potash. Over it is a firm but porous covering of plaster of paris. The fumes from the cyanide bring a quick and endless sleep. The pupa of this specimen was sent to me from Africa."

"Does that mean that you have facilities here for breeding and raising butterflies?" it was asked.

"Why, yes. Down in the cellar below you are upward of a million cocoons and pupæ—all living. That is the number we have developing all the time. But it's no easy matter. All their lives they have to fight their enemies and we must spend much time helping them. If it were not for our care insect parasites would destroy the pupæ. Mice and rats, too, are their deadly enemies and must be warded off constantly.

"When the cocoon is ready to give up its gorgeous butterfly the liberated prisoner is immediately dropped into a jar such as I just showed you. After it has lain dead for a little while, it is prepared for mounting, its wings expanded, and it is classified and placed among its fellows. All the specimens sent to me from a distance are wrapped up with wings folded together. It protects the coloring and prevents breaking."

"Have you been collecting and studying these insects for a long time?" was the next question. Mr. Frank smiled.

"All my life I have devoted to them," he said. "Up to fifteen or twenty years ago I spent about half of each year collecting. Sometimes our party would go into camp away out in some wilderness. When possible, we made our base some little settlement or village. Now I go out for only about six weeks each summer. It is my recreation, the one big diversion of the year for me. Last summer I went to the Catskills. The summer before that I was in Georgia. I have already laid my plans to go next summer into Maine." He stopped a moment and chuckled. "Sometimes we have very comical adventures," he went on. "Once in Mexico, I was picking my way through a swamp, bending forward and parting the dense growth of ten-foot sunflowers with my hands as I moved along. Suddenly I stopped.

"Almost touching my nose and just on a level with it, was the huge black head of a snake thrust between the stalks. I wasn't looking for snakes. It may have been only a harmless water snake. But I didn't wait to classify it. I think my shoulders hit the ground first. Then I rolled over and came away on my hands and knees. That was the quickest way to get where I wanted to go.

"I've learned more about snakes since. A few years ago a party of us were gathering specimens in the American Rockies. The others wore high boots to discourage the rattlesnakes, but I had learned that they wouldn't touch me, and so wore ordinary shoes. One day I climbed up a steep hillside, barren of vegetation and covered with loose gravel and sand. I came to a ridge and started down the other side. My foot slipped and away I went. It wasn't a long hill, but I covered the whole distance in quick time. When I brought up at the bottom, a big rattler was coiled about my waist. He came away when I grabbed him and landed as far as I could throw.

"Professor C. Schaeffer, of the Brooklyn Museum, was with us on that trip, too. One day he sat down on a low stump. The stump uncoiled with an insistent rattle that sent the Professor into the air and when he came down he was running."

While he chuckled over the reminiscence, the caller inquired about Mr. Frank's customers. "Do many amateur collectors come to you for help or advice?" was the question.

"Yes, a good many. A few come in every day. Fully three-fourths of them are interested in the scientific classification of the insects and in the study of their lives and habits. Only about one-fourth are what we call 'color collectors'—that is, their only concern in adding to their collections is whether a specimen is remarkable for its beauty.

"Sometimes the disappointment of a young collector who thinks he has captured a rare butterfly is pathetic. I heard of one such, a little boy, who sent to the Metropolitan Museum of Natural History in New York a large lunar moth that he had captured near his home upstate. With it came a very touching letter in which he said he hoped he could sell it to the museum. He hoped, too, that it would be found to be of great value, for then he could sell it for enough to buy the pony for which his heart was breaking. But it was only a very common variety and of no value."

It was growing late and the fire in the little stove had gone out. The Sunday section man reached for his hat and coat and Mr. Frank went with him to the front door. "Look out for the tussock moth," he smiled, as he held open the door. "They're common about here. They light on trees, hibernate under the bark in the winter and destroy the growth, if not found and killed. If one falls on the back of your neck while it is in the caterpillar stage the hairs will come out and cling to the skin. Each one is tipped with a little barb that holds it fast. If you rub the spot it will cause an irritation that will last for four days."

The reporter glanced up at the trees, turned up his coat collar, pulled down his hat brim and set his face toward a distant light past which thundered an "L" train bound for Park Row.

ORIENTALISM.

The suicide of General Nogi and his wife on the death of the Japanese Emperor and the suicide of a Russian admiral on the wounding of the Czarowitch on the royal yacht led an Orientalist to say:

"These suicides are the direct result of the Oriental worship of exaggerated filial piety—piety to the parents, and thence piety to the Emperor, or common parent of all.

"Japan has a multitude of stories illustrative of filial piety, and these stories, at least in their effect, have spread to Russia, a thoroughly Orientalized country.

"One story is a winter one. It extols a lad whose mother desired fish in a cold snap. The lad repaired to the river, stripped, lay on the ice till the warmth of his body melted a hole in it, and then, catching two fish through the hole, set them before his mother, nicely fried.

"Another story is about Robaishi. Robaishi was seventy and his parents were nearly ninety. Robaishi couldn't bear to think that his parents were grieving because they were so old, because they must soon die, and therefore he dressed himself in a gerat long dress of white baby clothes, with cap and bib, and sprawled on the floor and played with a rattle and cried. Robaishi's pious purpose was to delude his parents into the belief that, really, they were still quite young, inasmuch as they had in him an infant child."

THE OPEN SESAME.

Jerome S. McWade, Duluth's millionaire sociologist, has recently been making a scientific study of salesmanship.

"The one important point about salesmanship," he said at a salesmen's banquet, "is to win, with your first sentence, the liking and esteem and admiration of the buyer. Isn't that so?"

"Hear, hear," the salesmen assented, tapping the table with their knives.

"And there is one magic sentence," Mr. McWade continued, "which will win from every buyer this liking and esteem and admiration, and will open up a splendid opportunity for large sales.

"The sentence must be spoken in a tone of sincere and reverent admonition. It is this:

"'You work too hard.'"

Many a man puts his money and his faith in a speculation, and later on draws out his faith.

A fifth of the people of France are farmers.